

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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Statement on Observance of National Freedom Day

United States recommitts to pursuit of world without modern-day slavery

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
February 1, 2010

MEDIA NOTE**Observance of National Freedom Day**

This day marks the 145th anniversary of President Lincoln's sending to the States for ratification the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which promised freedom from slavery and involuntary servitude. In commemorating this day, it is a privilege to honor the sacrifices of those who lived and died in chattel slavery, those who fought to end it, and those who have worked in the decades since for a country free from involuntary servitude.

The United States recommitts itself today to pursue a world without modern slavery by utilizing every means necessary to shine a brighter light on this heinous crime, thereby ensuring the protection of victims, the prevention of future occurrences, and the prosecution of traffickers.

With the culmination of National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, the United States commits to building on global partnerships and to working across borders and barriers to realize the progress and potential of a slave-free world. The United States will work to ensure that every man, woman, and child, with no preference to national origin or standing in society, may pursue the greatest human right of all: freedom.

U.S. Medical Library Offers Free Information for Haiti Relief

National Library of Medicine joins with publishers on access initiative

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Staff Writer

Washington — Doctors and health care workers battling infection and disease in Haiti since the January 12 earthquake are being aided by an innovative collaboration between the U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM) and medical publishers.

Access to 213 biomedical journals and 69 medical textbooks is available to relief workers in Haiti on the Internet without cost for four weeks through the NLM's Emergency Access Initiative (<http://eai.nlm.nih.gov/docs/captcha/test.pl?url=>)

(EAI), a clearinghouse of information made available through NLM's MedLine/PubMed digital database.

Launching the initiative on January 25, Donald Lindberg, NLM director, said, "In light of the medical disaster unfolding in Haiti, it's hard to imagine a more urgent need. We know that Haiti's medical challenges will continue beyond the immediate emergency needs of the earthquake's aftermath."

Sheldon Kotzin, NLM's associate director for library operations, told America.gov, "We started [EAI] up in early 2009 to address man-made and natural disasters in the United States. It's really a temporary medical library trying to meet the needs of health professionals dealing with patient care in clinical settings."

Kotzin explained that while NLM's PubMed database includes information from more than 5,300 journals, the choice of the journals and books in the EAI offering came about because of a natural disaster in the United States.

After Hurricane Katrina hit in August 2005, Kotzin said, "we examined all of the requests for journal articles received at the library here and winnowed that down to a small number. At the same time, we asked the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] and World Health Organization for titles they would recommend."

"What we saw with Katrina is that after the first responders got in and did their jobs of search, rescue and emergency medicine, usually in the first few weeks, we began to see them having to deal with the chronic illnesses and infectious diseases that followed the disaster. That's why we didn't start EAI on day one" of the Haiti earthquake, he said.

"Basically, we see the EAI as a temporary library for those people treating patients not only on an emergency basis but also for information useful to treat and forestall the outbreak of communicable diseases."

Participating publishers are: American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American College of Physicians, American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists, ASM Press, B.C. Decker, BMJ, Elsevier, F.A. Davis, Mary Ann Liebert, Massachusetts Medical Society, McGraw-Hill, Merck Publishing, Oxford University Press, People's Medical Publishing House, Springer, University of Chicago Press, Wiley, and Wolters Kluwer.

The nonfee arrangement with the publishers lasts for four weeks, Kotzin said. "After that, it was decided there would be every opportunity to extend free use upon mutual agreement of the publishers and NLM. We went to the publishers of those journals and asked: 'Would you

be willing to provide free access in times of emergency' and in most cases they said 'Yes.'"

The NLM, which is the nation's largest medical library, is part of the National Institutes of Health — the U.S. medical research agency that comprises 27 medical institutes, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

According to the HHS Web site, HHS medical teams have treated more than 23,200 Haitian earthquake victims, performed 98 surgeries and delivered 28 babies. HHS has about 275 people in Haiti through its Disaster Medical Assistance Team and the International Medical Surgical Response Team operating at temporary medical stations set up in a soccer field near Port-au-Prince.

Other HHS teams are providing primary medical care at Thebaud, at the U.S. Embassy, and at a base in Petionville, in addition to evaluating patients sent aboard the Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort off the Haitian coast.

As of January 31, the U.S. government has devoted more than \$402 million in disaster assistance to Haiti, including approximately \$40 million for health-related programs.

Iran Urged to Inform U.N. Agency of Position on Nuclear Deal

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Iran needs to inform the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on whether it has changed its position toward a proposed agreement that would enable it to have its uranium supply enriched for use in a Tehran medical research reactor, according to Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley.

Crowley spoke to reporters February 3, one day after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reportedly said his government has "no problem" with sending his country's uranium outside Iran for enrichment. These developments come three months after the IAEA and the so-called P5+1 group of countries (Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States) proposed a deal (<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2009/October/20091023161806esnamfuak0.8907129.html>) that would provide Iran with enriched uranium for medical research while also ensuring the uranium would not be enriched to a level that could be used for nuclear weapons.

Crowley said it is "unclear" to what Ahmadinejad was referring February 2.

"To the extent that the president is offering a new perspective on the Tehran research reactor arrangement that was offered to Iran last fall in Geneva, you know, we will look forward to hearing about the Iranian position through the IAEA," he said.

"If, as he suggested, Tehran is willing to move forward to accept the arrangement that has been offered ... this would be of benefit to the Iranian people; and it would clearly be welcome news," Crowley said. "The real question is whether this represents a 'yes' and whether Tehran is willing to communicate that to the IAEA."

Crowley also denied the Iranian leader's February 2 assertion that there are negotiations occurring between the United States and Iran over the exchange of some prisoners.

"There are no negotiations taking place between the United States and Iran regarding a prisoner swap," he said. The United States has repeatedly called on Iran to release U.S. citizens it holds in custody, including American hikers Sarah Shourd, Joshua Fattal and Shane Bauer, who were arrested near Iran's border with Iraq in July 2009, as well as Iranian-Americans Reza Taghavi and Kian Tajbakhsh.

"We [also] remain concerned about the whereabouts of Robert Levinson, and have communicated that through a protecting power in Tehran repeatedly," Crowley added.

The assistant secretary said that there are Iranian citizens being held in the United States and the Obama administration is "willing to entertain ... questions and facilitate consular access, if that's what Iran desires." However, he rejected the idea of an exchange, saying there is no equivalence between "an Iranian citizen who has been indicted and/or convicted of arms trafficking, in violation of ... international law, and three hikers who wandered across an unmarked border."

If President Ahmadinejad is suggesting a willingness to "move forward and resolve the issues surrounding U.S. citizens in Iranian custody," the United States would "obviously welcome ... that opportunity," Crowley said. But "we're not interested in a swap, per se."

United States Donates 40 More Ambulances to Pakistan

With 126 ambulances donated, U.S.-Pakistan program flourishes

Washington — The United States has donated 40 more ambulances to health departments in Pakistan as part of an ongoing six-year project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the agency said in a press release.

With the January 30 donations to the district health departments in Dadu, Jafferabad, Vehari and Multan, the United States has now donated 126 ambulances since 2007, USAID's statement says. The ambulances, state-of-the-art and fully equipped, will help save the lives of those in need of urgent medical care — especially pregnant women and newborns — by providing more rapid access to local health centers, according to the agency's release.

USAID is partnering with Pakistani officials on the Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and Newborns (PAIMAN), a \$92.8 million project that seeks to build the capacity of existing health systems and create a community-based approach to ensure care for mothers and newborns, according to the statement.

"Access to medical services in emergencies is crucial to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality," said Miriam Lutz, a USAID health officer who spoke at the January 30 donation ceremony in Lahore. "We hope that this donation will help to protect the lives of mothers and their children in these four districts for years to come."

The ceremony mirrored one from December 22, 2009, when USAID donated 10 ambulances to the Dera Ismail Khan Health Department, according to an agency press release. Throughout 2009, the United States donated ambulances to rural communities in the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), the statement said.

The ambulances are specially designed and equipped to assist pregnant women and newborns and are being used to transport patients to renovated and re-equipped labor and delivery wards across Pakistan, according to a USAID statement from October 2009. The program also includes training for health department drivers and paramedics operating the ambulances.

The PAIMAN project is also upgrading 34 health facilities in NWFP and eight in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir region so they can function round-the-clock, according to USAID.

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